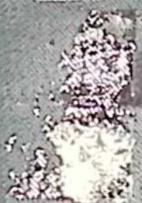
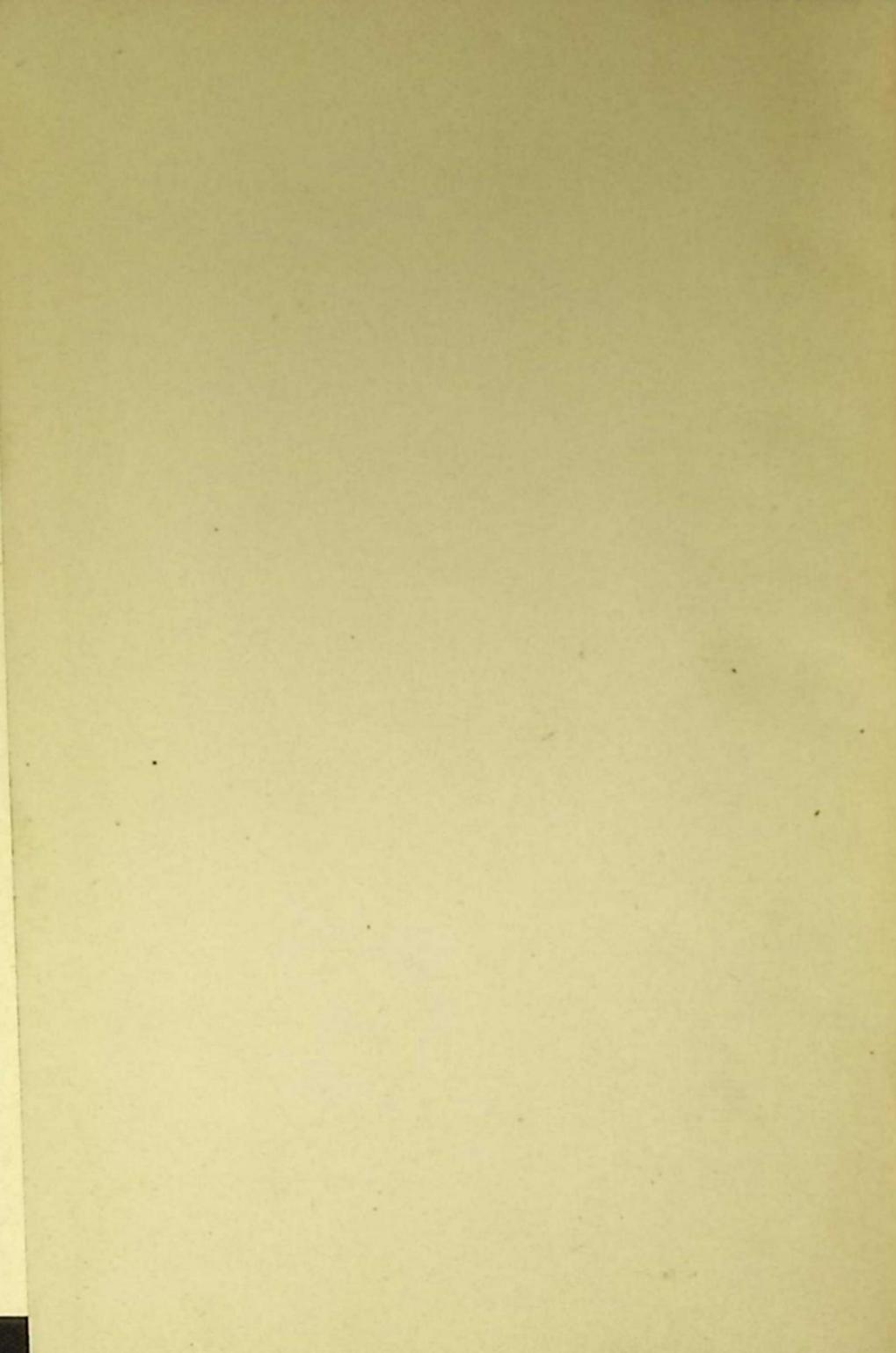


Balm for Wounded Spirits.

W. S. Plumer, D. D.





BALM

FOR

WOUNDED SPIRITS.

BY

WM. S. PLUMER.



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THERE ARE MANY WOUNDED SPIRITS.

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AFREELY confess to a growing sympathy with my suffering fellow men. The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning. Often is the heart made better by the sadness of the countenance.

On earth are always many stricken hearts. The children of sorrow are numbered by the million. The family of the afflicted, for multitude, stands next to the family of man. It never dies out. It is constantly receiving new accessions. We come into the world with a cry, we pass through it in tears, and we leave it with a groan. At the age of one hundred and thirty, Jacob exclaims: "Few and evil have been the days of the years of my life."

That the wicked should have many sorrows, should surprise no one. God's Word says it shall be so. Their course of life naturally brings about that result. Destruction and misery are in their ways. A gay exterior

often conceals a rankling wound. Even in laughter their heart is sorrowful. How can it be otherwise? For Jehovah curses their blessings. Mal. ii: 2.

But the righteous are not exempt. "God had one Son on earth without sin, but never one without affliction."

"In this wide world, the fondest and the best
Are the most tried, most troubled and distressed."

Well, be it so. Night makes the stars shine, and sorrow gives lustre to many a character. The Lord deals faithfully with His people. He never promised them ease or exemption from affliction. Jesus said: "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer: I have overcome the world."

"The path of sorrow, and that path alone,
Leads to the land where sorrows are unknown;
No traveler ever reached that blest abode,
Who found not thorns and briers in the road."

Genuine sonship with God never exists where men are not brought under the rod of correction. Heb. xii: 8.

Even where gaunt poverty never knocks at the door, nor persecution plies her implements of torture, nor sickness consumes the flesh, yet

in some form affliction invades every dwelling of the saints.

It greatly perplexes some to see the apparent confusion which seems to reign on earth. The wisest of mere men said: "All things come alike to all; there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked; to the good, and the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not; as is the good, so is the sinner; and he that sweareth as he that feareth an oath. This is an evil among all things that are done under the sun, that there is one event unto all." Ecc. ix: 2—3.

Sometimes things are even more perplexing, for a bad man may for a long time seem to have uninterrupted prosperity, while his godly neighbor experiences sad reverses. Asaph had sore travail of soul on this very matter. He became envious at the foolish when he saw the prosperity of the wicked. They were not troubled as other men, neither were they plagued like other men. But when he saw the doom that awaited them, he ceased to envy them. Ps. lxxiii.

Waters of bitterness have always been given

to the righteous. 2. Tim. iii: 11—12. See how Paul fared: "When we were come into Macedonia our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears." Indeed such has been the common lot of God's people. Read history.

Nor do afflictions commonly diminish with age. In fact, some of them are usually much increased as we go on in life. So said the Preacher. Ecc. xii: 1—5. In the 90th Psalm, Moses teaches the same thing. Our outward man perisheth, and so we should faint if our inward man were not renewed day by day. 2. Cor. iv: 16. Owen says: "If it be so that in the daily decays of the outward man, in all the approaches of its dissolution, we have inward spiritual revivals and renovations, we shall not faint in what we undergo. And without such continual renovations we shall faint in our distresses, whatever other things we may have, or whatever we pretend to the contrary."

Blessed is the man that behaves well in affliction. Rough seas and stress of weather make good seamen. Long wars and hard

battles make good soldiers. Bishop Hall says: "Every man looks fair in a time of prosperity, but the main trial of the Christian is in suffering." Let us cultivate the spirit of those lines now so famous :

"I ask not that my course be calm and still;—
No, here too, Lord be done thy holy will;
I ask but for a quiet, child-like heart;
Though thronging cares and restless toil be mine,
Yet may my heart remain forever thine,—
Draw it from earth and fix it where thou art.

"I ask thee not to finish soon the strife,
The toil, the trouble of this earthly life;—
No, be my peace amid its grief and pain.
I pray not, grant me now thy realm on high;
No, ere I die, let me to evil die,
And through thy Cross my sins be wholly slain."

MANY SOURCES OF SORROW.

LL LANGUAGES abound in words expressive of different kinds or degrees of affliction. In English we have adversity, agony, anguish, anxiety, bereavement, burden, calamity, discomfort, discouragement, disease, distress, disturbance, grief, infirmity, losses, misfortunes, misery, pain, perplexity, sadness, sickness, sorrow, suffering, torment, trial, tribulation, trouble, vanity, vexation and wretchedness.

Men often differ in their estimates of the strength of these words. Their use is much governed by individual preference, or by provincial practice. In some communities the word *trouble* is commonly used to express bodily ailments, yet by all correct usage some of these words are stronger than others.

Adversity describes a general condition, the opposite of prosperity. We speak of a calamity as great, of a trial as sore, of an affliction as severe, of anguish as acute, of ago-

ny as intense, of a loss as heavy, of a burden as grievous. A calamity may be averted, sorrows soothed, losses repaired, discomforts removed, disturbances settled, pains relieved, sufferings ended; grief subsides, agony is over, distress passes away, trials cease. These are samples of the use of words. But the present aim is not to define words, but rather to indicate the number and variety of terms used on the subject of affliction. This is a world of sorrows. This is a vale of tears.

"There is no flock, however watched and tended,
But one dead lamb is there!"

There is no fireside, howso'er defended,
But has one vacant chair.

"The air is full of farewells to the dying,
And mournings for the dead;
The heart of Rachel, for her children crying,
Will not be comforted!"

Sometimes our afflictions respect the state of our own minds. One says: "Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me?" Our blessed Redeemer said; "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." In fact, "the sufferings of His soul were the soul of His sufferings."

Sometimes our afflictions respect our bodies.

All have many weaknesses, many sicknesses. The weeping prophet says: " My flesh and my skin hath He made old: He hath broken my bones." " Our skin was black like an oven, because of the terrible famine."

A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches. It is like precious ointment. The most virtuous put the highest estimate upon it; yet often is it put in jeopardy. It was a good man, typically representing the Redeemer, who said, " Reproach hath broken my heart." " There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword." " Slander is the revenge of a coward;" and there are many cowards.

I once saw a boy with a beautiful bird, which he had caught in his trap. It was tethered with a ribbon. Its captor was delighted with his prisoner. Presently, when he was not thinking, away went the red bird and nice ribbon. The boy wept. So riches take to themselves wings and fly away towards heaven. They are not forever. The sudden loss of property is a great affliction, and probably tries one's virtues as sorely as the sudden acquisition of wealth.

Our lives themselves are often in peril. We are crushed before the moth. No man knows what moment he may die by the assassin or the mob, for "the wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth." In all its stages our life is but a vapor. We do all fade as a leaf. We are like grass. The wind passeth over it, and it is gone. Many are dying every day. "Thou carriest them away as with a flood."

Often our friends are the sources of our grief. Sometimes they die, and we lament for them, as David for Jonathan. Sometimes they are sick, and then we are grieved, as was Paul for Epaphroditus. Sometimes we see them going down into the depths of poverty, and we cannot help them. They will heed no advice till it is too late. Sometimes they become cold, and are even turned into strangers or enemies, and we say: "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me."

Many a time our enemies are lively and numerous and strong. They command much influence, they are fierce and cunning and un-

scrupulous. They are God's sword. David was not the only man who has cried out: "Mine eye waxeth old because of all mine enemies. Lead me, O Lord, in thy righteousness, because of mine enemies."

Then, too, our labors seem unproductive of any very great or good results. We labor in vain and spend our strength for naught. We often in bitterness cry like Moses: "Establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it;"—but still all seems to be passing away like water spilled upon the ground.

Our studies are often perplexing. Many, like the sorrowful Asaph, say they cannot see through providence. When they think to understand some hard question, it is too painful for them, and involves them in perplexity.

Or perhaps our families are broken up, or unpromising, or ungodly, or great sufferers. Then let us say, like David: "Although my house be not so with God [as I could wish], yet He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure."

EXAMPLES OF GREAT SUFFERERS.

OME ONE has said that the lives of very bad men and of very good men are the most instructive—the former warning us and putting us on our guard, and the latter encouraging us to imitate their example. Inspired men seem to have thought the same thing,—at least, the Scriptures seldom delineate a negative or middling character;—but they speak freely of Cain and Abel, of Moses and Pharaoh, of David and Saul, of Apollos and Simon Magus.

In like manner, they give us striking examples of great sufferings. We might dwell at length on the afflictions of Christ, for He was the greatest sufferer—pre-eminently “the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.” But His cup contained in it the wine of the wrath of God for our sins imputed to Him. The sword of Jehovah awaked against His fellow and smote Him. He bore the sin of

many, and "our sufferings do not deserve to be spoken of on the same day on which we speak of His sorrows."

A lengthened account of the afflictions of Job, of David, of Jeremiah, and of Paul might very pertinently here be given; but the reader is probably quite familiar with their history —at least, he can soon read it in the Scriptures. These men were illustrious examples of what divine grace can do in sustaining God's chosen, and in giving them a blessed victory.

No chapter of human history is more instructive and inspiriting than the history of the glorious martyrs who have suffered cruel deaths for their unswerving adherence to the cause of Christ. When Paul would sum up the grand achievements of holy confidence in God through Christ, he speaks of those who, through faith, subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance that they might obtain a better resurrec-

tion. Others were stoned; they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented. Glory be to God for giving us such examples of heroic and triumphant sufferings. No trial is likely to come on any child of God in our day except such as the saints have already triumphed over.

I think it is Henry Kirke White who says that "there are sorrows and there are misfortunes which bow down the spirit beyond the aid of all human comforts. * * There are afflictions, there are privations, where death and hopes irrecoverably blasted leave no prospect of retrieval." In such cases, dry sorrow drinks up the blood and spirits, and would utterly consume us but for the amazing interpositions of divine mercy. But God is the God of all comfort, and He can make all grace abound to us.

At the close of the late civil war in America, there were two men left without a hand or a foot; yet their general health was good, and they expressed a desire to live. I have seen a great sufferer, whose nurses could not

perceive that he slept at all for weeks together, yet his mind was calm and his words cheerful.

I once heard an eloquent discourse on the power of divine grace to sustain and comfort in great affliction. The preacher has been for years very favorably known on both sides of the Altantic. He still lives to love and be loved by thousands. He illustrated his subject by the recital of some incidents in the life cf one whom he had personally known. His statement was substantially as follows:

While I was a student at Hampden Sidney College, there was a young man in the county of Prince Edward who was afflicted with one of the most painful of all the diseases to which the human frame is liable. It was a spinal affection of the most aggravated character. Being entirely dependent on others for support, it became necessary to make some permanent arrangement which would secure for him the constant attention he required. Through the intervention of some benevolent persons connected with the institution, he was transferred to one of the rooms of Union Theological Seminary, and an arrangement

was made by which the students of the Seminary, in turn, waited on him, day and night. After he was transferred to their care, I often visited him, and had abundant opportunity of knowing what he suffered and how he bore the painful visitation to which he was subjected.

So contorted was he by his malady that he could not lie in a horizontal position, but was propped up by pillows placed under his head and shoulders; and he was so bent that usually his chin rested on his breast. At times, it gave him acute pain to partake of his necessary food. In some way the optic nerve was implicated, and so keenly sensitive did he become to the light that it was necessary to exclude it, as far as possible, from his room. A close curtain was drawn across the single window behind his bed, and by night a shaded lamp was all that was permitted in his apartment. As an additional precaution, he often wore a bandage over his eyes, lest an accidental ray should pierce him with new anguish.

And yet, amidst all these complicated and bodily distresses, such was his patience and

serenity of spirit, so hopeful and even cheerful was he in the tone of his conversation, so quick was his sympathy in all that concerned others, that his room, so far from being a place of gloom or in any way repellent, was an attractive resort to the students of the Seminary and to his friends in the neighboring college. He never murmured, but he often gave thanks. Though it gave him pain to partake of his daily food, yet heavenly manna brought strength and refreshment to his trustful spirit. For long years no sight of green fields or blue sky greeted his shaded eyes, but visions of beauty, infinitely transcending the fairest of earthly prospects, were disclosed to the eye of faith.

Thus racked and consumed with bodily pains, and thus replenished and comforted by divine grace, he lingered on, until at a late hour one night, while absorbed in study, I was stopped by hearing the tolling of the bell, which announced that his weary, worn and emaciated body was at rest, and that his patient, unmurmuring spirit was among the just made perfect.

The preacher added: "We hear of those

who say they would dispense with religion during life, if they could be sure of its supports in a dying hour; but I ask, What would have been the condition of this man, during these long years of pain and destitution, but for the supports and consolations of the gospel of Christ?"

Now, dear reader, when you are inclined to think yourself the greatest of sufferers remember this young man, or one of old who cried: "Is there any sorrow like unto my sorrow?"

OUR TRIALS ARE FROM GOD.

FFLICKION cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground." To a good man, such doctrine is a great comfort. It is for a joy that God's government over evil is as perfect and constant as it is over good. "Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?"—Amos iii : 6. Thanks be to God for so clear a revelation on this point.

The rebellion had broken out. Ahithophel was among the insurgents. Absalom had many friends. David was a fugitive from his own house. He is fleeing for his life, and a man of the house of Saul comes forth and rails at him. At this, one of David's friends is highly incensed, and says: "Why should this dead dog curse my lord, the king? let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head." But David was of quite another mind. He knew that when Israel left Egypt, not a dog wagged his tongue. Ex. xi: 7. He knew

that Shimei had been let loose upon him as a part of his humiliation, and he said to Abishai, "Let him curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse ye David. Who shall then say, Wherefore hast thou done so?"

2 Sam. xvi: 9-10.

Surely, we should never forget that all our trials are by the appointment of God, who numbers the very hairs of our heads. Without Him, not a sparrow falls to the ground. He controls even chance itself. He cuts short the life of the guilty Ahab by a bow drawn at a venture, just as certainly as if it had been aimed at his person. "The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord." Prov. xvi: 33.

Satan could do nothing against Job till he obtained permission from God. He is the God of this world, only so far as Jehovah chooses to lengthen his chain. The Most High says to his Church, "I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction"—Isa. xlviii: 10; and, "I will leave in the midst of thee an afflicted, poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord." Zeph. iii: 12.

While the Scriptures thus speak, they as clearly say that God doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men. Lam. iii: 33. This truth was a great comfort to dear Dr. Nevins in his sore bereavements. It may well encourage every humble soul. Owen says, "God never afflicts nor grieves men, but it is for some other reason and cause than merely His own will." He no more rejoices in misery than He does in iniquity. There is a cause for all the sorrows He sends. His justice or His love requires every stroke of His rod or His sword. He never acts inconsistently with His wisdom, His holiness, or His goodness. He never acts capriciously, but has good cause for all His decisions and actions. The fact that He is over and above all, acting with sovereign authority, shows how fit it is that He give no account of His matters to us, who are but worms, and vile worms at that. Sin is the cause of all our misery. To cure this, and rescue us from its power, God mercifully and lovingly chastens us—yes, chastens us sorely.

It impairs not the quality of the gold to put it in the fire. It only takes away its dross,

and at the same time shows the genuineness of the metal tried. This is the very form of thought in the mind of the man of Uz, when He said, "When He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold."

Let us therefore promptly admit that we deserve all our afflictions, and say, "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed." Yea, after our sharpest trials, let us freely say, as the Jews when returned from Babylon, "Thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve"—Ezra. ix : 13; or as the Church in all ages has said, "He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities."—Ps. ciii : 10.

Let us also submit entirely to the sovereign will of God, saying, "Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?" Lam. iii : 39. The child that falls into the arms of fatherly correction does by that act diminish the force of the stroke. Let us never forget that rebellious thoughts are sinful, and that the least sin is a greater evil than all our sorrows.

Let us constantly plead God's tender mercies and hide ourselves under the shadow of

His wings. Like as a father pitith his children, so the Lord pitith them that fear Him.

I believe it is Paul Gerhardt who sings of the sufferings of Christ, and then adds:

"And if the pure and sinless One
Could thus to sorrow bow,
Shall I, who so much ill have done,
Resist the cross? O thou
In whom doth perfect patience shine,
Whoe'er would fain be counted thine
Must wear thy likeness now.

Yet, Father, each fresh aching heart
Will question, in its woe,
If thou canst send such bitter smart
And yet no anger know.
How long the hours beneath the cross!
How hard to learn that love and loss
From one sole Fountain flow!"

BEHAVIOR UNDER SORE TRIALS.

AT pleases God sometimes to remove our loved ones very suddenly. If they are fully prepared for the change, it is ignoble in us to wish that they had suffered long or severely, merely to prepare us for the separation. But sometimes God calls into eternity those in whom we are much interested, but in whose piety we had little or no confidence. Sometimes those who make no profession of faith in Christ are taken out of the world with little or no warning. If we know their lives to have been wicked, such cases produce anguish.

The Scriptures provide sufficiently for all such cases. They tell us of Aaron's sons who for great wickedness were by God's just judgment taken out of the world in an awful manner. And yet they tell us how well that good man behaved. The record is not long, but it is very much to the point : "And

Aaron held his peace." He loved his sons. His heart yearned over them. He saw their wickedness. He knew that God was righteous. He could not understand the dark providence. But grace was given him not to say a word.

David, too, lost a son in mature years, and in an awful manner, fighting against his father's lawful authority. He had been a petted and spoiled child. Early in life he had committed fratricide and fled to Arabia, where he was sheltered by his heathen grandfather. After some time, through the influence of that bloody intriguer, Joab, David consented to his return. He was a very comely person, and resorted to all the arts of an unprincipled demagogue. At length he headed an open rebellion, and died by the manifest judgment of God. When the news reached the ears of his royal father, "the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate and wept; and as he wept, thus he said: 'O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom ! would God I had died for thee. O Absalom, my son, my son !'"

It is a question of the most serious character, how shall we behave in these sore, sudden afflictions? The question ought to be answered fairly and fully.

Whatever be the cause of our sorrow, we should ever guard against immoderate grief. There is not a word in the Bible going to favor a settled dejection of mind. There is no affection, however lawful in itself, that does not become sinful when indulged to an inordinate degree. When cheerfulness runs into levity, when industry becomes greediness, when sobriety degenerates into sourness, or sadness into a voluntary melancholy, we always commit sin. No lawful degree of sorrow works death. It seems strange that good people can allow themselves to afflict all around them. If we cannot rejoice in our circumstances, let us at least delight ourselves in the Lord our God. Where we have fears, even strong fears, respecting the eternal happiness of our deceased friends, we should still behave ourselves wisely in a perfect way. Take these hints for your guidance:

1. When Samuel bore the sad message to the venerable Eli respecting the doom of his

guilty sons, that good man said: "It is the Lord; let Him do what seemeth Him good." Job was involved in great uncertainty about the salvation of his children, and yet in all that matter "he sinned not, nor charged God foolishly."

2. God has a right to do what He will with His own. He never takes any except those He gave. He is the rightful and righteous proprietor and sovereign of us and of our lives, of our children and of their lives. His kingdom ruleth over all.

3. He is the best, purest, kindest, most loving Being in the universe. His counsels are of old faithfulness and truth. If HE is not to be trusted at all times and in all cases, confidence is at an end forever.

4. The Judge of all the earth will do right. He never errs, is never unkind. He is merciful and gracious, abundant in goodness and truth.

5. Beware that you sin not by rebellious thoughts and murmurings. One unworthy thought concerning God is more to be dreaded than any loss we can sustain in the death of our loved ones.

6. Your case is not peculiar. Other good people of every generation have had like trials. Scott, the commentator, tells of a noble lady whose wicked son went from bad to worse, till he was sentenced to death on the scaffold. He stubbornly refused to have a spiritual adviser, or even to listen to prayer, until he was swung off on the gallows. Then, the rope breaking, he fell to the ground, and before he was again suspended, he asked a little season for prayer. This was the only symptom he ever gave of a disposition to repent. Yet his pious mother was never heard to complain of the hardness of her lot. If God supports others, He can bear you up in like circumstances. Cast your burden upon Him.

7. We know not what change may take place, even in the dying hour. The thief converted on the cross is a wonderful instance of the amazing grace of God. Respecting your departed friends, you may cherish every hope that is justified by the largest promises and provisions of God's Word. Dr. Archibald Alexander says: "We are poor judges of what preparation

is. We know not what God may work in behalf of our children in their last moments. We know not but that the principle of grace may be implanted in such as are piously educated earlier than we are aware. In some cases, what is called conversion may be no more than the development of a principle implanted before. We know not how far the promise of God to believing parents, in behalf of their offspring, extends, when they are taken away in tender youth. If we believe that all the dying infants of such are undoubtedly saved, why may we not hope that those who have advanced a little beyond infancy, may be comprehended in God's gracious covenant? Many who never profess religion exhibit more of the Christian temper than some who are professors. They are diffident of themselves, and do not make known all that they have experienced. It can do no harm to hope as much as we can respecting the dead. It is no dishonor to God nor disparagement of His truth to entertain enlarged views of His mercy."

Whatever may be the case, let every soul hear and obey the command, "Be still, and

know that I am God." Quietness of soul in trying circumstances is a binding duty and a good sign of a gracious state.

TWO DANGEROUS AND OPPOSITE ERRORS.

GHE rays of the sun soften wax, but harden clay. Very different effects are produced on men by the same event. The gospel is preached. Some believe; others despise and wonder and perish. To some, the glad tidings are a savor of life unto life; to others a savor of death unto death.

It is just so with afflictions. To some, sadness is sanctified, and their moral character is thereby improved. As Daniel expresses it, they are purified and tried and made white. This effect always follows where afflictions are received with meekness, reverence, submission and true humility. Though the conduct of such is not exactly all it should be, yet it is in the main right, and God declares His approval of it in many parts of Scripture. For "It is good that a man shouid both hope and quietly wait for

the salvation of the Lord. It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. He sitteth alone and keepeth silence, because he hath borne it upon him. He putteth his mouth in the dust; if so be there may be hope. He giveth his cheek to him that smiteth him; he is filled full with reproach. For the Lord will not cast off forever; but though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies."

Lam. iii : 26-32. It was when the church said, "I will look unto the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me," that she was able to rise higher, and say, "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy; when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me. I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against Him, until He plead my cause and execute judgment for me: He will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold His righteousness." Mich. vii : 8-9.

The pious Mr. Jay somewhere speaks of losing both our comforts and our afflictions. We lose our comforts by the providence of

God removing them; but we lose our afflictions when we do not view them aright, nor act wisely under them. Errors respecting a time of trial are of two kinds that seem quite diverse from each other, but really are based in the same principle of unbelief. Against them both we are warned in the Old Testament, and also in the New. "My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of His correction." "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him." Prov. iii : 11; Heb. xii : 5. To despise God's chastisements is to be hard and unfeeling under them, to indulge the spirit of contempt. God complains of such, "Why should ye be stricken any more? Ye will revolt more and more." Isa. i : 5. This is both a very wicked and a very dangerous line of conduct. While there is hope, a good father chastens his child; but when all hope is lost and he discards him, he chastises him no more. The other error consists in being weary, in fainting, or in impatience under the rod of divine correction. One says there is no hope, when every good

ground of expectation is left to him. The former hardens his heart in pride, and says, "I don't care for it; I will make my heart as adamant." The latter says, "My punishment is greater than I can bear;" and he melts away and dies. One is stiff-necked and defiant; the other is broken-hearted, encourages a pining sensibility and is pleased with nothing. It was Pharaoh who said, "Who is Jehovah, that I should obey Him?" It was Belshazzar who said, "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God." Such desperation often cries out in its agony, but when relieved from pressing distress, repeats its former follies. Such conduct is considered very daring. Its seeming submission is feigned or deceptive, as when Agag said, "The bitterness of death is past!" 1 Sam. xv : 32.

But the disposition to pining and impatience is perhaps much more common, and by man more readily exercised. Jonah was a good man, but at one time had much need of severe discipline. Even in his attempted flight to Tarshish, where he suffered so much, he was not cured of his disposition to pre-

scribe to the Almighty. How foolishly he behaved about that gourd. He said, "It is better for me to die than to live." And God said to Jonah, "Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd?" And he said, "I do well to be angry, even unto death." Jonah iv : 8, 9.

Let us see to it that we avoid both these errors: that we yield ourselves to God. What can be more reasonable?

"Is resignation's lesson hard ?
Examine, you shall find
That duty calls for little more
Than anguish of the mind."

Who hath hardened himself against God and prospered? Or who hath unbelievingly pined away in affliction and been the better for it? Some have destroyed health so as lead to insanity and then to dissolution. Let us never forget that the Judge of all the earth will do right, and that all opposition to His will, whatever form it may assume, is criminal, and leads to misery and shame.

" When the sky is dark and lowering,
When thy path in life is drear,
Upward lift thy steadfast glances,
'Mid the maze of sorrow here.

" From the beaming fount of gladness
Shall descend a radiance bright;
And the grave shall be a garden,
And the hours of darkness, light.

" For the Lord will hear and answer,
When in faith His people pray;
Whatsoe'er He hath appointed
Shall but work thee good alway.

" E'en thy very hairs are numbered,
God commands when one shall fall;
And the Lord is with His people,
Helping each and blessing all."

BORROWING TROUBLE.

MANY have a sinful desire to see into the future. Rather than not know what was coming, men have resorted to astrology, palmistry, witchcraft, spiritualism and the wildest conjectures. This disposition is still common.

Some spend much time in pleasant dreams and fancies, none of which will ever be realized.

But in sad moods, men's minds go to the other extreme, and take gloomy views of all the future. Then they anticipate many calamities. It is in mercy that God has hid from our view coming events. We often misunderstand things that have already occurred. Still more frequently do we make a frightful thing of what is now passing before us. But could we, with our narrow capacities, look into the future so as to tell the general course of providence towards us in years to come, we should be very wretched. It was a peculiar ingredient of the sufferings of our

blessed Lord that He foresaw all His trials.
Luke xii: 50.

But we know not what shall be on the morrow, and on many accounts it is best for us not to indulge in idle anticipations.

1. We have something else to do. Our duties are pressing, solemn, numerous. If we can meet the responsibilities of the present hour, that will be as much as we can reasonably expect. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

2. When great trials come to true Christians, they have a promise of assistance according to their necessities. "As thy days, so shall thy strength be." Dying grace is seldom given except to *dying* believers. To them it is never denied.

3. By idle anticipations we greatly enhance our sufferings. Porteus says: "He who foresees calamities suffers them twice over."

4. We are positively forbidden to pry curiously into the future. "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law." Deut. xxix: 29. Our

great wisdom is found in entire submission to the sovereign will of God in all coming events.

5. There is no end to the torment we may thus inflict upon ourselves. Seneca was right when he said: "The state of that man's mind who feels so intense an interest as to future events, must be most deplorable." Johnson says: "Many philosophers imagine that the elements themselves may be in time exhausted; that the sun, by shining long, will effuse all its light; and that, by the continual waste of aqueous particles, the whole earth will at last become a sandy desert. I would not advise my readers to disturb themselves by contriving how they shall live without light and water." Sometimes folly seems to know no bounds.

6. A good writer says: "Ye may live through to-morrow. Then be prepared for it, prosecute your plans, pursue your business, be industrious and enterprising. But be not unmindful that there is another branch of the alternative. You may *not* live through to-morrow. Be prepared equally for that. To-morrow may introduce you into the presence of God, may close the account of life,

may withdraw the offer of mercy, may cut short the opportunity of salvation. What if it shall? Are you ready for that interview and that reckoning?"

A similar error is committed by those who spend their time in trying to discover how they shall be delivered from distresses now pressing upon them. Mordecai was a good man. He greatly feared God and trusted Him also. He was persuaded that enlargement and deliverance would come. He thought the queen might be the instrument of rescue to God's chosen people. But he was not sure. He told his cousin that at present the finger of providence seemed to point to her. At the same time he freely told her that if she entirely declined, ruin would overtake her and her house, while it should be seen that God would not forsake His ancient people.

One very proper way of disposing of such temptations respecting the future, is to dwell much on the eternity that is before us. What is all time? What are all the trials of time? It will not be long till every living man will look back on the worldly things that made,

him glad or sorrowful, and see and say that they are things of nought. The wicked and the righteous in a future state will alike wonder that such vanities could ever have engrossed their attention. Let any thoughtful man even here say, "What importance will I attach to this or that event, to this or that possession a thousand years from this time?" and he will at once see how idle are his intense feelings.

"Eternity! thou pleasing dreadful thought!
Through what variety of untried being,
Through what new scenes and changes must we pass?
The wide, the unbounded prospect lies before me;
But shadows, clouds and darkness rest upon it."

Then let us gird up the loins of our minds, stand in our lot, cheerfully committing everything to the God of all grace and mercy. We see not, but He sees what is coming, and has made full provision for it. Let us sing:

"I see not a step before,
As I tread the days of the year;
But the past is still in God's keeping,
The future His mercy will clear;
And what seems dark in the distance
May brighten as I draw near.

"So I go on, not knowing—
I would not if I might;
I would rather walk with God in the dark
Than walk alone in the light;
I would rather walk with Him by faith
Than walk alone by sight.

"My heart shrinks back from trials
Which the future may disclose;
Yet I never had a sorrow
But what my dear Lord chose;
So I send the coming tears back
With the whispered words, 'He knows.'"

THE FOUNTAIN OF CONSOLATION.



HE Scripture abounds in passages which exactly suit the people of God in all their afflictions. He who knows and believes them is thoroughly furnished for every trial. Many have thought it well to make a collection of these precious things for their own use. It is right to do so. In the hope of inciting Zion's pilgrims to such a work, the following list is given, not as the best that could be made, but as an encouraging sample of what can be done in this way:

"He is the Rock, His work is perfect; for all His ways are judgment; a God of truth, and without iniquity; just and right is He." Deut. xxxii: 4.

"The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide; neither will He keep His anger forever." Ps. ciii: 8, 9.

'God so loved the world that He gave His

only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John iii : 16.

"Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift." 2 Cor. ix : 15.

"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matt. xi : 28.

"Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." John vi : 37.

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." John xiv : 27.

"Because I live, ye shall live also." John xiv : 19.

"I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Phil. iii : 8, 9.

"Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of

God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." I Cor. i : 30.

"The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." I John i : 7.

"By one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." Heb. x : 14.

"I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul." Jer. xxxi : 25.

"Ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy." John xvi : 20.

"We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." Rom. viii : 28.

"To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Phil. i : 21.

"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." I John iii : 14.

"I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." Job xix : 25, 26.

"The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me." Ps. cxxxviii : 8.

"Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Phil. i : 6.

"Though ye have lien among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove, covered with silver and her feathers with yellow gold." Ps. lxviii : 13.

"Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." Job xiii : 15.

"Let all those that put their trust in Thee rejoice; let them ever shout for joy, because Thou defendest them." Ps. v : 11.

"My beloved is mine, and I am His." Cant. ii : 16.

"Sing, O heavens, and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the Lord hath comforted His people, and will have mercy upon His afflicted." Isa. 49 : 13.

"I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth

there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing.” 2 Tim. iv : 6-8.

“ Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.” Ps. xxiii : 4.

“ Into Thine hand I commit my spirit; Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.” Ps. xxxi : 5.

“ O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Cor. xv : 55-57.

“ If we believe that Jesus died and rose again; even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.” 1 Thess. iv : 14.

“ I am the resurrection and the life.” John xi : 25.

“ Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power.” Rev. xx : 6.

"Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but Thee ? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee. My flesh and my heart faileth : but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever." Ps. lxxiii : 24-26.

"There remaineth a rest to the people of God." Heb. iv : 9.

"He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son." Rev. xxi : 7.

"We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." 2 Cor. v : 1.

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes ; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying : neither shall there be any more pain : for the former things are passed away." Rev. xxi : 4.

"He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Heb. xiii : 5.

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen." Rev. xxii : 21.

TRUE COMFORTS.

RE you afflicted? Beware of bad comforts and comforters. It is always dangerous to betake ourselves to broken cisterns, which can hold no water. This a common error. To this course many will tempt you. When by their sins Israel brought on themselves the divine judgments in the shape of wars and public enemies, instead of humbling themselves under the mighty hand of God, and asking Jehovah, their King, to deliver them, they were much inclined to go to Assyria or Egypt for horsemen.

There are always weak or bad men who officiously offer advice which it is dangerous to follow. They may not give as wicked counsel as did Job's wife; but perhaps it is not much better. Whatever leads us to light thoughts of sin, or to hard thoughts of God; whatever inclines us to lean to our own understanding, or to make light of God's

heavy strokes, is sinful. We can not safely lean on any arm but that of the Almighty.

We may rally our friends when they act childishly under light sorrows; but it is cruel to say to those under great grievances, that it is unmanly to weep and be in bitterness. Sometimes men tell us that our tears will do no good, when that is the saddest thing in all our tribulation. If tears would bring back our departed joys, we might then have hope. Again, men tell us that our griefs will not last always; but what we want is present relief, or at least present assistance in bearing our burdens. Many such foolish things are said.

What, then shall the afflicted do? The answers are many; such as—

I. If your affliction is such that human sympathy can either soothe or alleviate it, ask the aid and kindness of true Christian friends. It is both lawful and natural to do so. Job, though a great man and a great believer, said: "Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends, for the hand of God hath touched me." He had before said: "To him that is afflicted, pity should

be shown from his friends." Paul, the great apostle, tells us how the visits and sympathy of his friends *refreshed* him. Even our blessed Master called on His disciples for sympathy in His great agony. Christian love is often a great healer.

2. But we need divine sympathy also—even the compassions of God Himself. This is manifest in many ways, but pre-eminently in and by Jesus Christ. On this matter, both Testaments speak the same language. By the evangelical prophet, the Lord says: "In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them; in His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and He bare them, and carried them all the days of old." Isa. Ixiii : 9. In the New Testament we are assured of the same blessed sympathy: "We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Heb. iv : 15.

3. It is always wise to roll our burden over on the arm of the Almighty. He is stronger than man. He is mighty to save and strong to deliver. "Cast thy burden upon the

Lord, and He shall sustain thee. He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved."

Ps. lv : 22.

4. Then the more of sanctified suffering we have, the more real comfort are we sure to possess, even in this life. Paul expressly says: "As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ." 2 Cor. i : 5. The blessed apostle was so in love with Christ that one of his strong desires was "to know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death." Phil. iii : 10.

5. Not only does God increase our blessed experiences by calling us to trial, but "He thus prepares us to help others. For He"comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." 2 Cor. i : 4. Think of that, and give thanks.

6. Paul presents a very striking view of the trials of God's people, when he speaks of himself (and so of others) as "filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ."

BENEFITS OF AFFLICTION.

AF the trials of God's people were without any benefits, their case would indeed be sad. But all their experience unites with God's Word in declaring that from all their sorrows comes much of "the peaceable fruit of righteousness." One apostle is very bold and says, "My brethren, count it all joys when ye fall into divers temptations [trials], knowing that the trying of your faith worketh patience." Jas. i : 2, 3. And Paul says, "We glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed." Rom. v : 3-5.

Let us look at some particulars :

1. We are naturally giddy and thoughtless about the most weighty concerns. Folly is bound up in the natural heart, and our trials make us sober and thoughtful. Lam. iii : 28. It is only fools that put away serious

thoughts. The power of reflection chiefly distinguishes a man from a brute. The habit of reflection eminently distinguishes a wise man from a fool.

2. Affliction enables us to keep in view our latter end, by presenting to us distinctly eternity.. Anything is good for us that reminds us that time is short, that life must soon close, and that all beyond is boundless, shoreless eternity. Cecil says that mankind are divided into two great sects—Timists and Eternists. Reader, to which of these do you belong ?

3. I am not sure that any one can state the mental process by which the effect is produced ; but in some way trouble is almost certain to remind us of our sins. It was so in the case of Joseph's brethren. "We are verily guilty," they cried. Trouble made David say, "Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions."

4. One of the great ingredients of true piety is humility, deep and unfeigned. Both Testaments greatly commend this grace. Affliction is suited to humble us, and, if we are truly pious, it will thus do us good. Jere-

miah says affliction has this effect. Lam. iii : 20.

5. Affliction puts us to praying. It so affected Jonah. He was asleep in the ship, but at prayer in the whale's belly. An apostle says, "Is any afflicted, let him pray." James v : 13. By Asaph, God says, "Call upon me in the day of trouble : I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." Ps. 1 : 15.

6. Affliction teaches us the vanity of this world, and weans us from it. How effectually it does this, daily experience teaches. It writes vanity of vanities on all things below the skies. It made even a great statesman exclaim, "What shadows we are, and what shadows we pursue."

7. Affliction is a great expounder of Scripture. Luther said, "Three things make a good Theologian—meditation, temptation, and prayer." And more than twenty-five hundred years before Luther, David said, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn Thy statutes. The law of Thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver." Ps. cxix : 71, 72.

8. Its great object is to promote purity of

heart. Paul expressly says that the Lord chastens us that "we might be partakers of His holiness." Heb. xii : 10.

9. Of course, affliction has a reclaiming effect on wanderers. "Sufferings are the only relics of the true cross, and when divine grace turns them to our good, they almost perform the miracles which blind superstition ascribes to the false one." David says, "Before I was afflicted I *went* astray; but now have I kept Thy word." By the son of Beeri, God says, "I will go and return unto my place till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early." Hos. v : 15.

10. So affliction teaches us quietness and submission. It gives us the blessed temper of a weaned child. It hushes our perturbations. It teaches us that God will have His way. O yes,—

"These weary hours will not be lost,—
 These days of misery,
 These nights of darkness, tempest toss—
 Can I but turn to Thee;
 With secret labor to sustain
 In patience every blow,
 To gather fortitude from pain,
 And holiness from woe."

11. In like manner, sanctified affliction leads us to trust in God. It strengthens our faith, and faith is a great grace. "As gold answers all things, so faith gives the soul propriety in all the rich consolations of the gospel, in all the promises of life and salvation, in all needful blessings; it draws virtue from Christ to strengthen itself, and all other graces." It sings:

"My times are in Thy hand!
Many or few my days,
I leave with Thee—this only pray,
That by Thy grace I, every day
Devoting to Thy praise,
May ready be
To welcome Thee,
Whene'er Thou comest to set my spirit free."

12. In like manner, affliction improves all our holy principles. Leighton says, "Those graces that would possibly grow heavy and unwieldy by too much ease, are held in breath, and increase their activity and strength by conflict. Divine grace, even in the heart of weak and sinful men, is an invincible thing. Drown it in the waters of adversity, it rises more beautiful, as not being drowned indeed, but only washed; throw

it into the furnace of fiery trials, it comes out purer, and loses nothing but the dross, which our corrupt nature mixes with it." O, it is a great thing to be a Christian, tried and taught and trained for war and glory—for war on earth and for glory beyond the skies.

"There the saints like suns are radiant,
Like the sun at dawn they glow;
Crowned victors after conflict,
All their joys together flow;
And secure they count the battles
Where they fought the prostrate foe."

AN INSTRUCTIVE EXAMPLE.

 HIS short series of articles on affliction may be fitly closed by referring to the sore trials of Rev. Dr. Wm. Nevins, the third pastor of the First Presbyterian church, Baltimore, Md. This good man was born in Norwich, Conn., Oct. 13th, 1797, and died Sept. 14th, 1835. He was of a joyous, confiding nature, had a beautiful mind, became a capital preacher, and was for several years one of the best popular writers in our country.

In the latter part of his life he was sorely tried. Though not past middle life, his health began to fail. Then it pleased God suddenly to remove his wife by cholera. Then his youngest child and his wife's mother died. So one trial followed another with fearful rapidity. Late in October, 1834, I paid a short visit to his sweet home. About two weeks after that (November 8th) Mrs. Nevins died. Some of his thoughts on that sad event are

before the public, but I have two letters which have not been printed. On hearing of Mrs. N.'s departure, I wrote a long letter to the widowed husband. In reply, he wrote me thus:

"Baltimore, Nov. 28, 1834.

My Dear Plumer—I consider every letter of condolence I have received since my most grievous affliction as deserving some reply, and not among the least worthy is yours. Oh, my friend, the Lord has touched me in the tenderest point. He has dealt a blow which but for His sustaining arm, would have prostrated my intellect and laid me as low as it did my dear wife. How unexpected it was; how sudden and, in some respects, how awful. Not better was she the day she went out with you than on the fatal Friday, on the evening of which she was attacked. I never saw her look better. Her state previously had been one of such slight disorder that it was not considered at all alarming. But I will not go into particulars. Oh, what a scene it was! It almost frightens me when I recollect it. And yet, throughout the whole my pulse was not agitated. Not a nerve quivered. I

wonder at myself that I was so composed, so able to do for her and to talk with her; to tell her of Christ, and to ask her about her views and feelings. That I have consolation in her death, you may know by my being in the body. I think without this I could not have been sustained. I mean not by this to limit the Almighty. Nothing is too hard for Him. I wish I could see you and talk with you. You are one of the few friends I would care to see. I wonder not, when I hear some talk to me, that another pronounced certain persons 'miserable comforters.'

"Dear Plumer, my mind is so busy I am in danger of thinking wrong. I cannot always fix my mind on that 'It is the Lord.' I am looking among second causes. Here I find nothing to comfort me, but much to distress. My wife was a noble character, a most precious woman. Oh, how unlike most of the females that one sees. A most prudent, faithful, affectionate wife was she—to me the most charming of women. Oh, how she loved me, and how I loved her. It is hard,—oh, it is harder than you in your inexperience can imagine,—for such to part. Another sorrow

is joy to this. Oh, the feeling in my heart when, after dreaming of her as alive, I wake in the morning, or in the lonely watches of the night, to the cutting consciousness that she is dead, not lying near me, but in a coffin and in a vault. And yet *she* is not there. Mary is, I trust, in heaven. Some with much less evidence would say I *know*. But the more I love a dear one that departs, the more evidence I require to satisfy me. I often wonder how easily Christians are led to rest in the assurance that their friends have gone to Jesus.

"When my wife was dying, a dear Christian friend took down her expressions at the time and afterwards sent them to me. Who knows but God ordered this for my poor heart's comfort? What think you? I am *morbid* on this subject. Can you minister to a mind thus diseased?

"I have never had so much evidence that I love God as I had the first few days after my wife's decease. Then I seemed to have a perfect confidence. But since that I have flagged somewhat. Yet I have been sustained for every duty. Last Sunday preaching

from 'Our light affliction,' &c., and even when I looked down on her vacant seat, and saw in the pew only my poor motherless boy, emotion was not allowed to interrupt me in preaching. Almost every one else wept while I pleaded with them to come to Jesus by the argument of my own sorrows; but my eye was dry, my countenance composed.

"I have been interrupted two or three hours. It is a mercy to you perhaps that I have been. How I have run on! When I get on this theme, I know not where to stop. Now I must live to Jesus alone. I have lived too little to Him, too much to myself and my family. Oh, what has sin done! What an evil it must be! Tell me how I can be useful, how I can glorify God and serve the cause of Jesus till I go to Him. Life has lost every charm but one—that of living for Jesus' sake. But I will stop. Good bye; God bless you.

"Your affectionate brother,

W. NEVINS."

This letter was promptly answered in the best way I could. Then came the following reply:

"Baltimore, Dec. 9, 1834.

"My Dear Plumer—Your letters of the 1st and 4th were received. I have read more in Howe since my affliction than in any other book except the Bible, and had read the letters you pointed out, before I received your letter, as also his various funeral sermons. The sermons on Hope I have commenced. I have found no single piece so good for the mourner as Cecil's friendly visit to the house of mourning. And there is one consideration in it which has, I think, as much power over the heart as any other that can be presented. It is this: If the Comforter could render it even expedient for Christ's disciples that they should be separated, and He go away, how much more can the Comforter render it expedient for us to be separated from the most beloved relative or friend? It may not strike you as it did me. I am far from doubting that God is more than able to make up my loss. I should be sorry to think that He is not capable of making the soul happier than any one of His creatures is. He made my wife and gave her all the charms she had. Certainly He must have infinitely superior

charms Himself. I can reason well on the subject. But God never intended that logic should reach and have power over the heart.

"Your last letter, which you hesitated about sending, was seasonable, and did me good. You answered mine properly. I must be content with *faith* while I am in this world. I have been wanting sight. I have been desiring, as it were, to see my wife's sweet form in the circle around the throne.

"I agree with you in all the points which your letter lays down—that none of us deserve from God anything better than His wrath, and that we need not fear His doing injustice to us, or to any we love. I believe there is no doubt about my having been divinely supported. To say that I am quite satisfied with my state, I am not able. I shall never be satisfied until I awake with the divine likeness. I have not all that spiritual consolation which I hear others speak of, and have still to lament that I have so little joy in God. My state of mind for the first few days was truly heavenly. I believe I lost it by descending to second causes, and looking back instead of looking up, and now I find it hard to re-

cover the lost ground. Oh, that I appreciated the infinite loveliness of Christ as justly as I do my wife's. I blush and mourn to think that I could see such attractions in a fallen daughter of Eve, and that I see no more charms, and feel no more attractions in the character of the dear Son of God. Oh, I am ashamed of the weakness and unworthiness of my love to Jesus. How I rejoice in the splendor of the natural sun, forgetful of the indescribably more blessed radiance of the Sun of Righteousness! I say the light is sweet, and appeal for proof to a sunbeam; but what is the sweetness of that light to the light of the divine countenance!

"The instances you give of silence and submission under far greater trials, shame me. 'I will lay my hand upon my mouth.' The kindest anxiety you could feel for me is that you express when you say you want me to get through this trial without sin. I hope I may.

"I find the habit I have got into of writing for the press has made my hours pass much more agreeably than otherwise they would. I have written a great deal since my affliction.

I have articles on hand for the *Observer* for several weeks, and last week I wrote a tract."

Thus this good man wrote and prayed and suffered and trusted and triumphed for a few months, and then triumphed into heaven. Glory be to God for all His mercies to His people who are chosen in the furnace of affliction.

GLORY BE TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST.

